Provincial Parks in the 80's

BC Parks

Ministry of Environment and Parks

INTRODUCTION

1986 is the 75th anniversary of B.C.'s first provincial park, Strathcona. This document provides background information about the Provincial Park System and sets the stage for the next 75 years.

MANAGEMENT PHILOSOPHY

Over the past 5 years the Parks and Outdoor Recreation Division's management style has been changing from operating a bureaucratic government agency to operating a customer oriented corporate division of the government conglomerate where "the public of B.C. are its shareholders" and "the government is its Board of Directors".

Parks and Outdoor Recreation Division has incorporated a marketing approach in delivery of park services, where **QUALITY** and **EXCELLENCE** go hand in hand with **EFFICIENCY** and **EFFECTIVENESS.**

PARK SYSTEM
MANDATE AND GOALS

The Park Act calls for the designation of Provincial Parks and Recreation Areas for "the recreational use and enjoyment of British Columbians".

Based upon the Act, goals have been defined for conservation and recreational purposes. Areas selected to meet conservation goals are also selected to include outstanding recreation resources, and wherever possible parks contribute to more than one goal.

Conservation Goals

Goal 1. Protection of Representative Natural Landscapes
The provincial park system includes conserved areas that are representative of the natural landscape of British Columbia, thereby protecting and presenting, for posterity, the characteristic combinations of flora, fauna, landforms, and waters associated with this diverse province.

Goal 2. Protection of Outstanding Resources
The park system contains a wide scenic selection of the best outdoor recreation features, natural features, wilderness areas, and historic resources of British Columbia.

Recreation Goals

Goal 1. Destination Opportunities
The provincial park system includes appropriate outdoor recreation lands and facilities providing for the use and enjoyment of major outdoor recreation destinations in British Columbia.

Goal 2. Travel Corridor Opportunities
The provincial park system includes, as a complement to other suppliers, outdoor recreation lands and facilities in association with major provincial travel corridors to ensure that travelling vacationers are supplied with a basic network of scenic stop-offs.

Goal 3. Regional Recreation Opportunities
The provincial park system includes, as a complement to other suppliers, land and facility-based opportunities for outdoor recreation distributed in association with British Columbia's different geographic regions in order that British Columbians are assured a basic supply of outdoor recreation services close to home.

PARK SYSTEM - LAND BASE

The B.C. park system began in 1911 with Strathcona Park established to serve as a tourist destination to attract visitors to Vancouver Island. Today, the system contains 367 parks and totals 4.6 million ha or 4.8% of B.C.'s land area. Over 17 million visitors will have used Provincial Parks in 1986.

Defining New Parks

* there are finite limits to the amount of park land required to meet present and future demands; a strategy has been developed to determine how many parks are needed.

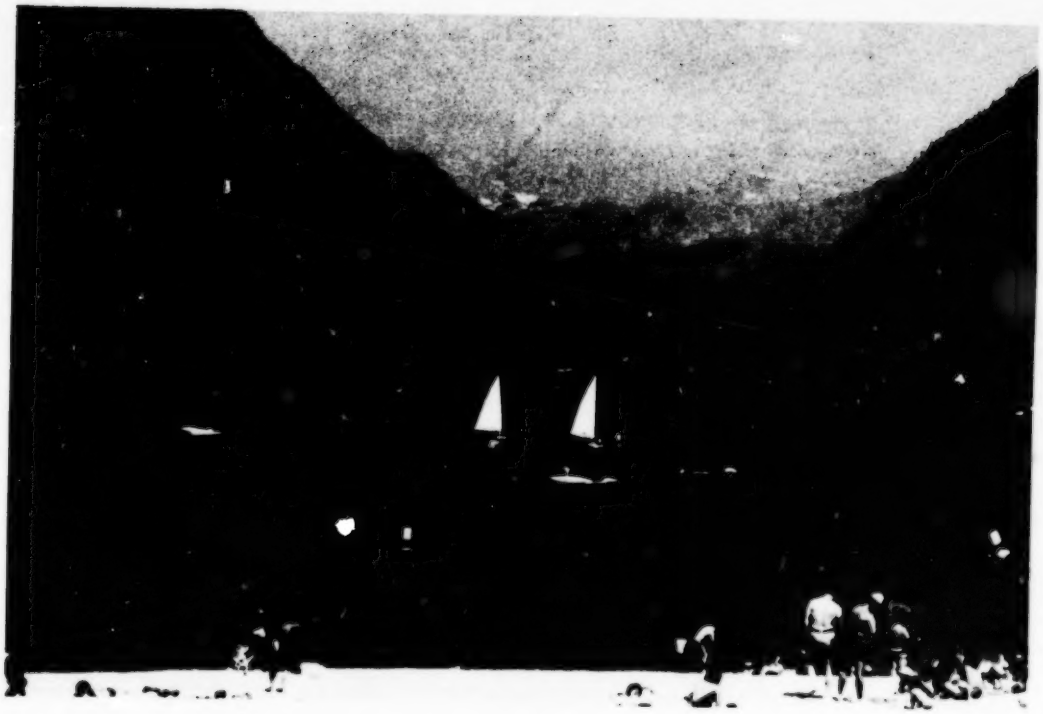
* the selection criteria for major conservation parks has been established through definition of 52 different landscapes in B.C. 31 landscapes are represented in the existing park system.

* the land system plan was presented to Cabinet in 1985 with recommendations for implementation and a process to resolve outstanding issues. The future system would increase area of parks to 5.4% of B.C.'s land area.

* a first step toward implementing the park system plan arose from the report of the Wilderness Advisory Committee which recommended more than 20 areas be given some form of preservation status. Cabinet has already given approval in principle to this report.

The Division will pursue the land system plan, presented to Cabinet in 1985, with other agencies in order to rationalize the park system resulting in a net increase of 600,000 hectares by 1990.

Detailed proposals for new park areas recommended by the Wilderness Advisory Committee have been prepared and are ready for presentation to Cabinet.



Management Plans for Existing Provincial Parks

* commitments have been made to involve the public in the review of management plans for 4 Provincial parks; they are: Skagit Valley, Tweedsmuir, Kokanee Glacier and Strathcona.

* topical issues arising from these reviews will include proposed revisions to existing boundaries and extraction of timber and minerals.

* in addition to the 4 parks listed above, registered mineral claims exist in other Provincial parks and a strategy must be developed to deal with these claims.

The Division will propose resolution of all outstanding non-conforming resource use issues and boundary changes in Parks during 1987.

National Parks

* final agreement has been reached with Canada on the boundaries and compensation to settle Pacific Rim National Park. B.C. will be paid $25 million upon signing of the agreement early in 1987.

* negotiations have commenced with Canada for a new National park in South Moresby.

The Division will complete the agreement on Pacific Rim National Park ready for ministerial signature and provide a progress report on negotiations for the proposed South Moresby National Park before March 1987.

PUBLIC USE AND IMAGE OF PROVINCIAL PARKS

The public's perception of Provincial Parks contributes to their image of government. A new marketing approach is aimed at increasing park use, and increasing public awareness and support for the Provincial Park System.

Increasing Park Use

* park use suffered a major decline from 1981 to 1984 when total attendance dropped from over 16 million to under 15 million visits. Campground use dropped 6% per year to just over 2 million campers.

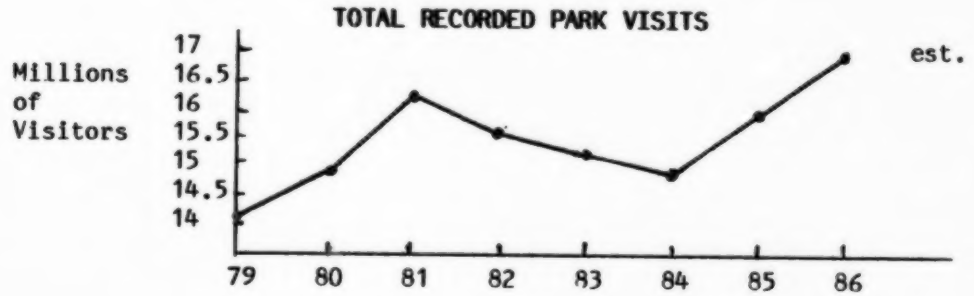
* in 1985 use jumped back to nearly 16 million total visits and in 1986 use is expected to reach nearly 17 million.

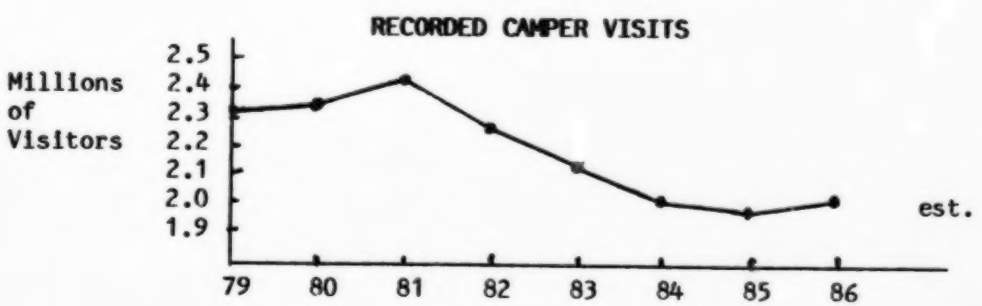
* after leveling off in 1985 camping use is expected to increase approximately 2% in 1986.

* studies have been conducted to determine future trends in camping and visitor satisfaction surveys have been given to over 10,000 park users.

* in 1987 B.C. Parks will begin a 3 year campaign to promote the camping industry in B.C. by working with private operators, equipment suppliers and the Ministry of Tourism in joint promotions. "Camping B.C. it's a whole new world" will be the campaign theme.

A continued marketing effort is expected to boost park use to 20 million visits by 1990. A special campaign will be mounted in 1987 to return camping use to 1981 levels.





Park Awareness

* recent public surveys indicate that:
  - 93% of the population feel that the B.C. government should continue to set aside and operate parks; and
  - 46% of the population feel that they are not well informed about parks.

* it is evident that maintaining a vibrant park system depends on sustained and strong public support.

* consequently, B.C. Parks initiated the following public support measures:

  - "Jerry the Moose" was established as the mascot of B.C. Parks both to provide visibility and to act as a "Goodwill Ambassador".
  - the "75th birthday" theme for 1986 provided a province wide focus for parks.
  - 75th birthday party celebrations were held in over 50 parks.
  - a special booth at Expo manned by "Park Rangers" that had over 80,000 contacts with visitors.
  - over 100,000 entry forms were received for a B.C. Parks birthday contest with 6 different park vacation trips given out as prizes.
  - videos were produced and distributed throughout B.C. highlighting the superlative recreation opportunities in B.C. Parks.

* Parks is working with Tourism on their theme of "Home grown vacations" to incorporate parks vacations throughout B.C.

Establish a B.C. Park corporate image by 1989 "QUALITY OUTDOOR RECREATION EXPERIENCES FOR EVERYONE IN SUPER NATURAL B.C. PARKS"

PROVIDING QUALITY RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

New recreation opportunities are created in parks when new facilities are developed. However, new users can be attracted to parks by maintaining consistently high quality facilities and by working in partnership with the private sector to provide opportunities in parks and in surrounding areas.

Maintaining Quality Facilities

* the Division operates facilities which have a 1986 replacement value of 270 million dollars.
* these facilities include over 11,000 campsites and over 22,000 day use sites.
* many facilities were newly constructed or upgraded from 1971 to 1973 when $32 million was invested in a special facility development program.
* now these facilities are beginning to require major maintenance expenditures if they are to continue to provide quality opportunities to park users.
* showers in park campgrounds rank as the highest demand request from park users. Installation of showers in 12 park campgrounds was enthusiasticly received. Showers are considered to be a basic service in destination park campgrounds where length of stay is 1-2 weeks. Extra services such as electrical and sewage hookups, laundromats, convenience stores etc. are not provided in park campgrounds.

The Division has prepared an ongoing 3 year facility maintenance program to ensure park users continue to enjoy park experiences in quality surroundings. The first year of this program has been presented to the Treasury Board for funding in 1987.

1985 FACILITY FACTS

Replacement value of all facilities	$268,000,000
Replacement value of campgrounds	$66,000,000
Replacement value of day use areas	$46,000,000
Number of campsites	11,321
Number of picnic sites	4,835
Number of sani-stations	46
Number of day use sites	22,526
Number of boat launch ramps	108
Miles of hiking trails	2,663
Miles of ski touring trails	391

New Recreation Opportunities Through New Development

* Parks present excellent opportunities for enhancing recreation potential for the enjoyment of British Columbians and as an attraction to tourists from outside the Province. New recreation services can be readily extended in park situations where access is available, around special natural features or in the prime holiday destination areas of the Province. Recent examples of these are:

  - the Division has recently created new recreation opportunities along the Coquihalla Corridor to meet the needs of highway travellers.

  - the Division has capitalized on the spectacular natural features of Wells Gray Park by opening up new areas of the park and will soon make land available in the park for the private development of a wilderness lodge.

  - the Division has created a new recreation opportunity and a new tourist attraction through the first phase development of beach and day use areas at Kalamalka Lake Park in Vernon.

B.C. Parks will continue to identify and present to government new recreation opportunities to contribute to the success of B.C. Tourism Industry and the enjoyment of local residents.

Cooperating with Private Sector Recreation Suppliers

* both within and around park boundaries opportunities exist to cooperate with private suppliers of recreation services for the joint benefit of park users and many small businesses.

* the Division has successfully privatized ski operations at Cypress, Seymour and Manning Parks. These businesses are offering public recreation at a reduced cost to government.

* more than 100 small businesses are providing a wide range of accommodation and recreation services in many Provincial parks.

* direct investment opportunities are being presented by the Division to give private enterprise the chance to expand recreation services in parks at little or not cost to government. The Division's proposal to privately develop show caves at Horne Lake Caves Provincial Park is a recent example.

* joint marketing, promotion and research present further opportunities for cooperation with private suppliers.

B.C. Parks will work with the private sector to encourage the development of new commercial recreation services for park users.

OPERATING THE PARK SYSTEM

Operating parks has shifted from own forces to more services being provided by the private sector through contractors, concessionaires and volunteers. To ensure excellence in the provision of services to park customers a satisfaction survey was developed in 1985 and will be used each year to evaluate our level of service.

Cost Effective Management

* parks have always used large numbers of seasonal staff to provide visitor services.
* between 1980 and 1985 positive changes in staff efficiency were effected through contracting services to the private sector.
* full time staff were reduced by 28% from 1980 to 1985 and seasonal staff were reduced by 23% over the same period.
* cost effective measures implemented by the Division have resulted in providing park services at the least cost per visitor day of any park organization in Canada.
* in all cases where contracting has been implemented, management control of the park remains fully with the Division.

B.C. PARKS STAFF CHANGES
F.T.E.S

YEAR	FULL TIME	SEASONAL	TOTAL
80/81	411	330	741
81/82	390	374	764
82/83	388	378	766
83/84	353	269	690
84/85	288	269	557
85/86	295	253	548

EFFICIENCY INDICATORS

YEAR	PROV	VISITORS PER MAN YEAR	COST PER VISITOR
85/86	B.C.	29,049	1.60
85/86	Ont.	14,323	2.90
85/86	Alta.	6,238	5.50
85/86	Man.	11,471	2.70
80/81	B.C.	20,125	1.80

B.C. Parks will strive to remain the leader in the cost effective delivery of park services.

Customer Services Through Contractors

* in 1985, 288 contracts provided the following services in parks:
  - 76 full service contracts-garbage collection, trail maintenance, firewood provision, cleaning campsites, keeping statistics and fee collection;
  - 112 partial service contracts - one or more of the above services;
  - 76 contracts for the supply of firewood; and
  - 24 interpretive contracts conducting visitor service programs.
* a 1985 study of visitor service contracts estimated average savings of 14% or $220,000 due to contracts. This study also found that the level of service provided through contracting was acceptable.

The B.C. Parks will examine every opportunity for services to be provided by private contract where price and quality are equal to or better than service provided by own forces.

Volunteers in Provincial Parks

* in 1985, 650 volunteers spent over 16,000 hours in parks, nearly triple the volunteers and double the hours contributed in 1984.
* park hosts provided volunteer information services in 70 parks in 1986 up from 12 in 1984.
* this winter several campground hosts are going to become "B.C. Parks Ambassadors" on their stay in campgrounds in the Western United States.

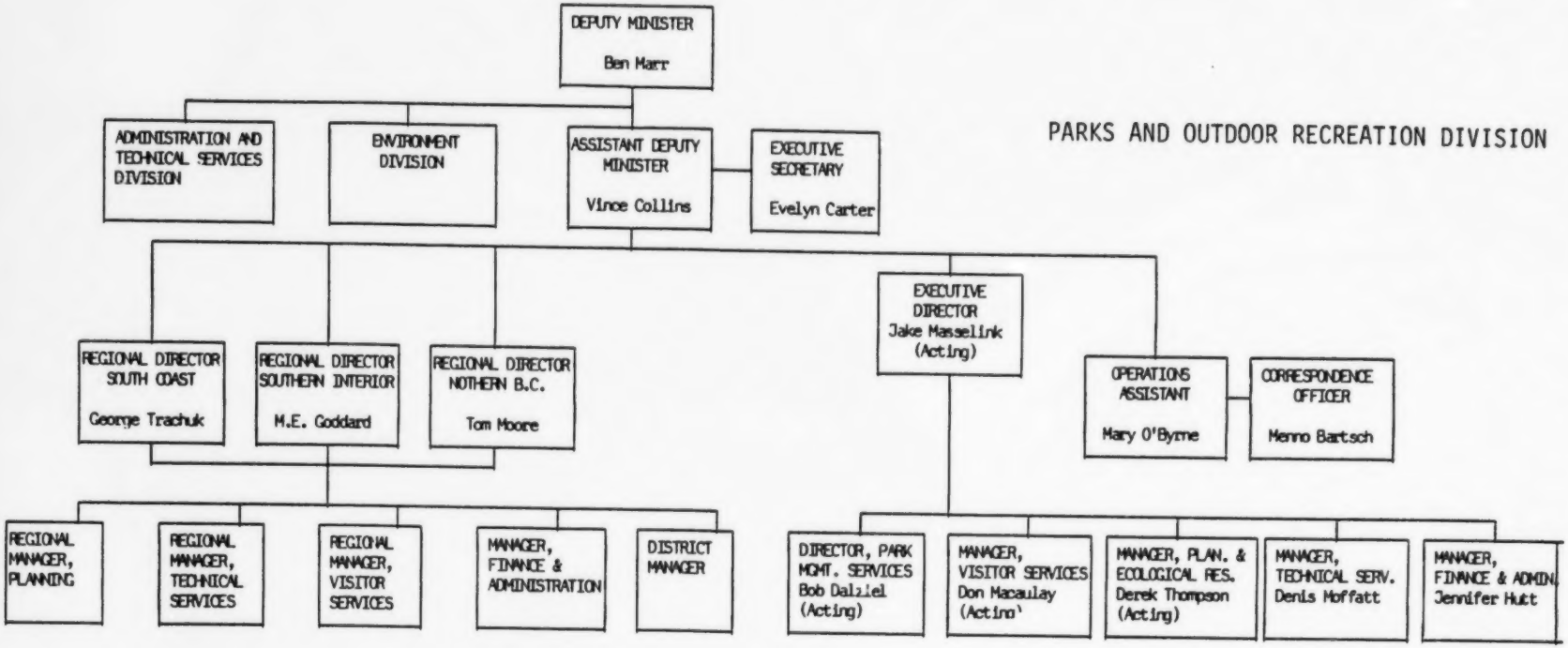
By 1990 the Division will encourage volunteers to double the hours contributed in 1986.

Responding to Customer Needs

* in the 1985 Satisfaction Study, 69% of park users indicated that services and facilities were excellent or above average.
* Satisfaction Study respondents indicated they would like to see more showers, flush toilets, a freeze on campground fees and greater park security. In 1986 these needs were addressed.
* camping fees in 1986 were held at $5.00 for minimum service, $7.00 and $10.00 for campgrounds with showers and visitor programs.
* shower facilities have been added to 12 parks and security has been improved throughout the system.

B.C. Parks will continue to respond to customer needs towards the objective for 1990 of 80% of all park users rating services excellent or above average.

PARKS AND OUTDOOR RECREATION DIVISION



Program Areas

Park Management Services

-management concepts/strategies/ goals
-accountability information research
-liaise central services
-budget process & workplans
-management information system development
-organizational development
-personnel management
-labour relations
-operational audits

Visitor Services

-park programs
-information/promotion
-safety & security
-operations
-volunteers
-concessions

Technical Services

-facility design & development
-facility maintenance/ reconstruction
-land administration
-heritage preservation/ restoration
resource management

Planning & Eco. Res.

-ecological reserves
-system planning
-master planning
-capital program
-land acquisition

Finance & Administration

-library
-uniforms
-files
-office systems
-financial management
-personnel administration
-property
-admin. support

PARK SYSTEM FACT SHEET

* the park system consists of 365 areas totaling 4.6 hectares or 4.8% of B.C.'s land area.

* total attendance in 1985 was nearly 16 million and 1986 attendance is forecast to be nearly 17 million.

* camping attendance was just under 2 million recorded visits in 1985 and is expected to increase by 2% in 1986.

* camping revenues in 1986 will be approximately $3.5 million.

* boating attendance in 1985 was almost .3 million visits.

* day use attendance in 1985 was 13.6 million visits.

* camping fees are $5.00 for a minimum service campground, $7.00, and $10.00 for campgrounds with showers and visitor programs.

* businesses operating in parks numbered 178 in 1985.

* 650 volunteers contributed over 16,000 hours in parks in 1985.

* 288 contracts were issued to provide services in parks in 1985.

* in 1985 campers surveyed in 12 provincial park campgrounds reported the following origins:

B.C.	69%
Alberta	14%
Washington, Oregon & California	8%
Other Canada	4%
Other	5%

* the campers surveyed rated facilities and services as follows (% indicating excellent to above average):